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**PREMPEH COLLEGE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT IN LATE COLONIAL ASANTE**

by

**YASUKI KUWAJIMA**

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Centre of West African Studies  
School of History and Cultures  
College of Arts and Law  
University of Birmingham  
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## ABSTRACT

At the heart of this thesis are Prempeh College, a secondary school erected in Kumasi (historical capital of Asante) in 1949, and the circumstances of chiefs' status, prestige, and education. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Asante was incorporated into the British Empire through 'indirect-rule', chiefs' struggle for their status within the coexistence of 'indirect-rule' system and pre-colonial orders was intensified. Since late 1940s, chiefs in the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti were confronted with the attacks of so-called 'educated commoners'. In addition to those political contexts, the situation of education during late 1940s was characteristic in a sense that 'modern' 'rational' development of colonies was perceived as realizable and scientific and industrial education was introduced with the financial support of the colonial Government and the metropole. Prempeh College, in those contexts, represented diverse intentions of chiefs, education officers and the Education Department of the Gold Coast Colony. Meanwhile, since the 1950s, Prempeh College enhanced its prestige by turning out influential talents. At the same time, its alumni network has crucially contributed to the construction of a new nexus among chiefs and chiefly elites.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Society and Education in the Colony / Ashanti until 1949 .....</b>	<b>6</b>
1-1. The More Cocoa, the More Conflicts within Local Society .....	6
1-2. Status Mobility and Socio-Political Meaning of Education.....	7
1-3. The Development of Education on the Initiative of both the Colonial Government and the Local Society .....	10
<b>Chapter 2 Chiefs' and Asantehene's crisis, and comeback .....</b>	<b>15</b>
2-1. Social crisis from the bottom: <i>Akonkofo</i> and <i>Nkwankwaa</i> .....	15
2-2. Political crisis from the outside: Indirect Rule reviewed .....	17
2-3. Chiefs' and Asantehene's rally: restored Ashanti Confederacy Council .....	22
<b>Chapter 3 Secondary School for Chiefs and Asantehene, Prempeh College .....</b>	<b>27</b>
3-1. Limited Opportunities for Secondary Education .....	27
3-2. 'official' secondary school and chiefs: the case of the Prempeh College.....	32
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>47</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure I.	Distribution of Government Expenditure on Education
Figure II.	Number of Primary Schools
Figure III.	Number of Primary School Pupils
Figure IV.	Number of Secondary Schools
Figure V.	Number of Secondary School Pupils
Figure VI.	Number of Candidates for the School Certificate Examination

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis will focus on discussion on secondary education in Asante<sup>1</sup> until 1949 when several expectations of Asantehene (throne of the Asante Empire or Greater Asante) and chiefs, missionaries and colonial officials were embodied while interlacing. By placing Prempeh College, a secondary school erected in Kumasi in 1949, in the context of the socio-economic transformations of cocoa cash-cropping, the structures of Indirect Rule, and the broader colonial educational policy, this thesis highlights the significance of secondary education in the production of what became Asante's political, economic and social 'elite' in the mid twentieth century.

Ashanti, a region in the present Ghana, is a main arena for this thesis. This place's history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has deeply been affected by the more south, the Colony of the British Gold Coast although by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the former glorious kingdom, Asante Empire or Greater Asante, nearly extended to the boundary of the present Ghana. After urban 'riots' that occurred in not only the Colony but also Ashanti in 1948, it was in the Colony that Kwame Nkrumah and his supporters called 'verandah boys' inaugurated the Convention People's Party (CPP) in 1949. The southern part of the British Gold Coast advanced toward decolonization, and Asante itself and even its historical research have been swallowed by the big wave of decolonization from south.

Jean Allman (1990) points out these difficulties that Asante suffered. In the analysis of the National Liberation Movements (NLM) during the 1950s, Allman straightens up previous studies. On the one hand, NLM has long been considered as 'a tribalist,

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<sup>1</sup> According to Owusu-Ansah (2005: 47), Asante is a 'region, a people, and an Akan nation. Asante is the proper Akan spelling, although other English spellings such as Ashanti and Ashantee can be found in print.' In fact, 'Ashanti' has been used as an administrative unit (region) in both colonial era and even present-day. At the same time, in colonial era, 'Asante' was often used in order to express historical continuity between pre-colonial and colonial era, and national unity including local people. For example, the 'Ashanti' Confederacy Council (ACC), a Native Authority established by the colonial Government, was renamed the 'Asante'man Council in 1950. In this thesis, briefly, 'Ashanti' indicates a division in colonial administration. On the other, 'Asante' is used in order to imply the continuity of local society and people between pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial era.

regionalist, parochialist ghost of the past' (Allman 1990: 264), compared to CPP. On the other, basically, many Asante historians tend to research into only pre-colonial Asante society, until 1896 when Kumasi, a capital of Asante, was ruled by the British, and Prempeh I, Asantehene, and his inner circles were exiled, and 1902 when that region was annexed into the Colony (Gold Coast) as Ashanti. As a result, even if some historians tried to investigate colonial Asante after 1902, they converged on the particularity of Asante, so-called 'Asante nationalism'. On the contrary, Allman (1990) attempts to describe late colonial Asante during 1950s as not a nation but a stage for traditional and internal struggles for economic, political and social initiatives.

Allman's standpoint, to some extent, will be common to this thesis. Certainly, colonial Asante since 1902 never assimilated with the Colony in terms of the Colonial Government's ruling system and social order. Rather, the legitimate introduction of cocoa production and colonial officials intensified existing economic, political and social conflicts within Asante society. After the restoration of Asantehene and the establishment of the Ashanti Confederacy Council (ACC) were approved by the Colonial Government in 1935 Native Authority Acts, those conflicts gradually extended beyond the boundary of Ashanti region. As Allman describes, Asante came to the 1950s while bearing those ongoing conflicts.

This thesis will add more specific picture to that general one. In this thesis, Asante society during 1940s will be paid much attention. Ghana's national history has placed 1948 riots and 1949 inauguration of CPP as a watershed, and Allman also seems to hold the same perception. In contrast, this thesis makes an effort to grasp the late colonial Asante in the 1940s, and compare its outcome with the 1950s or Allman's research. The point is to use secondary education as a lens through which to view the broader patterns of Asante social and political history.

In 1948 riots, agitators were commoners or youngmen most of whom were primary-school leavers. Most scholars had focused on them as a new political power and the agitating force of Ghana's decolonization. For example, Dennis Austin's seminal *Politics in Ghana* (1964) is a pioneer of taking up Standard VII leavers for discussion on Ghana's decolonization. Allman (1990) pays much attention to youngmen (nkwankwaa) as one of traditional powers in Asante society. At the same time, not only traditional authorities (chiefs) but also missionary and colonial educationists were alert to the potential political and social impacts of primary education. Philip Foster (1965:127) is also aware of it. As we shall see in Chapter 1, social changes had caused unique meaning to education in colonial Ghana: a new type of status symbol, a means to demonstrate prestige whether individually or communally. Therefore, many studies of schooling in Ghana - and indeed in other parts of Britain's African empire - are concerned with attempts to mitigate the perceived problem of the 'semi-educated' African primary school leaver by promoting agricultural and vocational training.

On the contrary, Asante secondary-school leavers (or people who experienced secondary education) has not sufficiently been discussed although the educational careers of some intellectuals and nobles were in secondary education. That is because there were few and short-lived secondary schools in Asante; again, in comparison to studies of the 'elite' secondary schools and training colleges of the Gold Coast Colony area (including Achimota and Mfantsipim), relatively little has been written about comparable schools in Ashanti, including Prempeh College. However, secondary-school leavers were scattered on Asante's economy, politics and society, and they themselves could potentially be the catalysts of traditional conflicts. For example, the *Ashanti Pioneer*, a local newspaper in Kumasi, had sometimes published articles on a vital role that secondary education played at the reinforcement and

alternation of existing chieftaincy in the second half of the 1940s. Recent educational studies<sup>2</sup> have also stressed the centrality of secondary, rather than primary, education in transforming the socio-economic status of individuals and social groups. An event that embodied those struggles for secondary education was the opening of Prempeh College at Kumasi in 1949. Both the Colonial Government and the Colonial Development and Welfare Act from the metropole financed that new secondary school. Its managers were colonial officials, mission bodies, and remarkably, Asantehene Prempeh II and the Ashanti Confederacy Council (ACC), which was the first time in Asante's history. Prempeh College would have borne Asantehene's and his inner circles' hope for social innovation.

In this thesis, discussion will unfold through reading of three types of sources. First of all, the reports of the Education Department of the Colonial Government are mainly used in Chapter 1. By reading reports covering 1930s-1950, we grasp the entire picture on education policies devised by the Colonial Government, the contemporary condition and problem of education in the Colony, Ashanti and the Northern Territories, as perceived by colonial officials. Secondly, the large volume of memorandum collected by the Oxford Development Records Project will be useful in the analysis of Chapter 1, 2 and 3. They are a set of answers to questionnaire submitted by the former colonial educationists and missionaries acting in the Colony, Ashanti and the Northern Territories from 1930s to 1950s. We will be able to make clear their awareness of the involvement of chiefs in education in general. *Ashanti Pioneer*<sup>3</sup>, a Kumasi-based local newspaper founded in 1939, is the third source and much more important than the others in this thesis. According to A. M. Israel (1992), that newspaper had continued to insert local concerns, namely 'the concerns of the cocoa farmers and the Ashanti

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<sup>2</sup> For example, see Quist (1999) and Quist (2003).

<sup>3</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer* was renamed to *Pioneer* since 1957. For the contents of articles appearing throughout that newspapers' history, see Israel (1992).



Confederacy' (Israel 1992: 413), while carrying international and wartime news. Particularly, in the 1950s, articles on connections between government policies and the cocoa price, and chieftaincy often appeared on its top pages. John Wallace Tsiboe (1904-1963), the founder of the Abora Printing Press and *Ashanti Pioneer*, and his background should be explained in developing a dispute. The volume 1 of *Encyclopaedia Africana Dictionary of African Biography* (Appiah 1977: 322) reports that his family belonged to the genealogy of chiefly descent. At the same time, he had gained economic wealth by working as a trader. Also, he advocated Gold Coast's decolonization, and supported CPP and subsequently NLM. Although it is doubtful if he was a secondary-school leaver or experienced secondary education, Tsiboe corresponds to one of intellectuals mediating between Asantehene, his inner circles, and Asante intellectuals. However, *Ashanti Pioneer* was not always the obedient supporter of Asante chiefs and Asantehene. For example, Krobo Edusei, an employee at the Abora Printing Press, was so prominent in antagonizing with particular chiefs and chieftaincy itself that articles on suits between him and ACC often appeared at *Ashanti Pioneer*<sup>4</sup>. Thus, that local newspaper had provided Asantehene, chiefs, intellectuals from either Ashanti or the Colony, and readers with a broad platform for debate.

This thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter describes Asante's economy, politics and education by 1949. In Chapter 2, Asante social initiatives will be explained in detail, particularly the relationship between ACC / Prempeh II (Asantehene) and young men (nkwankwaa). The final chapter's objective will be to discuss secondary education in Asante from the case of Prempeh College and its pupils. Via analysis in these three chapters, this thesis will venture to reassess changes of the 1940s for Asante society, and to deliberate the significance of secondary-educated people within the transforming society.

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<sup>4</sup> For details, see *Ashanti Pioneer* published in 23 March 1948, p.2. Also, see *ibid.* published in 24 March 1948, and in 5 November 1949.

## Chapter 1 Society and Education in the Colony / Ashanti until 1949

### 1-1. The More Cocoa, the More Conflicts within Local Society

There is no shortage of research on the socio-economic transformation of Asante through commercial agriculture in the first half of the twentieth century. Cocoa production was introduced into Ashanti region at the beginning of the twentieth century and became popular by the 1920s. Production reached its first peak in 1936-37 before swollen shoot disease posed a challenge to farmers in the 1940s (Austin 2005). Whilst the expansion of cocoa was certainly beneficial to the colonial government, it did not depend upon governmental coercion. Rather, it took place largely as a result of the initiative of African farmers and their responsiveness to market incentives<sup>5</sup>.

In both the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti, the introduction of cocoa as a cash crop gave rise to profound social and economic transformations. This had a substantial impact on gender relations. The Akan-speaking areas of Ghana are mainly matrilineal. As people migrated to acquire land that was suitable for cocoa, wives increasingly found themselves at a distance from their own family's land, with their time taken up with working on their husbands' cocoa farms. Scholars such as Allman and Tashjian (2000) have argued that the production of cash crops with the use of family labour was detrimental to Asante women, because, under a matrilineal system of inheritance, the cocoa farms that wives had helped to build could be claimed by their husband's matrilineal kin, leaving the wife with little show for her efforts. This resulted in considerable conflicts over inheritance, and an emerging distinction between farms that were constructed on 'family land' (which could not be claimed by a wife) and those that were deemed to be the husband's 'self-acquired property' (to which the wife had a stronger, although not absolute, claim)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Although some farmers (e.g. in Sunyani) were shocked by the dramatic decline in prices during the world depression of the 1930s and abandoned their farms, this response was by no means universal (Roberts 1987). Once cocoa had been planted, the trees could be expected to produce yields upon their maturity, without continuing inputs of intensive labour, and thus production could continue despite fluctuations in prices.

<sup>6</sup> Again, Roberts (1987) describes the transformation of women's marriage strategy through changes in gender occupation caused by cocoa production.

In addition to these disputes between nuclear and extended families, cocoa also engendered new forms of conflict between chiefs and their subjects, or chiefs themselves. The patterns of production can be understood partly in terms of the intensive inputs of labour that are required in the early stages of cocoa farming. With the exception of outstanding farmers who were mainly chiefs, most new farmers engaged in small-scale production. In Sefwi Wiawso, for example, the initial production of cocoa was under the control of chiefs, who were able to call upon the labour of the numerous members of their large households as well as hiring seasonal labourers. A wider section of the local population was participating in cocoa production by the inter-war period, but they did so on a smaller scale, with their own households forming the basic unit of labour (Roberts 1987: 52-53). The British conquest of Asante was followed by attempts to end the internal market in slaves and eradicate the use of slave labour within Asante society. This meant that where farmers could not access sufficient labour within their own households, hired labour or sharecropping arrangements became the obvious alternatives, but each of these carried costs and risks (Austin 2005). It is a key feature of the Akan-speaking areas of Ghana that chiefs occupy a particular stool, and these stools control land. As cocoa is best grown on particular types of land, migrant farmers rented the rights of use in land from the chief whose stool controlled the area in which they wished to plant cocoa trees. The increasing economic value of land gave rise to several different forms of conflict: between two or more stools over the control of previously unused areas of land; between subjects of a stool, who wished to access unused land without payment, and chiefs who wished to rent it out to migrant or 'stranger' farmers; and between chiefs and migrant farmers, who sometimes felt that they were being exploited by the land-owning stool through the levying of fees and taxes (Austin 2005).

## 1-2. Status Mobility and Socio-Political Meaning of Education

People frequently moved to different places in order to produce cocoa, and once their trees had matured and required lower inputs of labour, cocoa farmers could also diversify their activities into trade or artisanship, which further increased their mobility. Berry (1993: 159) suggests that, in this mobile and transforming society, peoples' lives depended on social networks. In order to derive economic, political or social benefits

from these networks, individuals were required to invest in them. As the mobility of people was enhanced, social networks diversified dramatically, and this could be perceived as either complementary or threatening to the older ties that had dominated pre-colonial social relations. For example, migrant cocoa farmers may have established new networks with chiefs and neighbors in new places, while still maintaining matrilineal relationships in their place of origin. According to Berry (1985: 79), new types of social networks were formed less through kinship and more through common interests derived from occupations, livelihoods, interests, schooling and residence. Migrant cocoa farmers stood to benefit from diversifying their social networks, particularly in the frequent cases of litigation, where claims to land might depend on the willingness of neighbours, lineage members or other followers to testify in one's favour.

Here, social upheaval caused by education should be considerable. Allan and Tashjian (2000) are mainly concerned with the impact of education on family structure in Asante, particularly ownership over children and the problem of who should rear children. Most schools were started by Christian missionaries who advocated monogamous marriage and the nuclear family household. As the number of primary schools increased in the Colony and Ashanti, Allman and Tashjian (2000) indicate, school fees became a major area of tension between nuclear and extended families in early twentieth century Asante<sup>7</sup>. Berry (1985), on the other hand, is more concerned with education as a form of investment in social networks. She indicates that contributions towards school facilities were a form of investment in the development of the community in which the school was sited. Therefore, investors could confirm and make visible their own status within that community through investment in its schools. As formal education offered children opportunities to leave the agricultural sector and engage in white-collar employment, it was perceived not simply as a benefit to individuals and their families, but also as a

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<sup>7</sup> Whilst it appears to have been customary for a biological father to induct a son into a particular skill or occupation, and for children to assist their nuclear family in food farming / preparation, children ultimately 'belonged to' their matrilineal kin, and expected to inherit from their maternal uncles (mother's brothers). However, until the 1940s-50s, native tribunals in Ashanti had gradually upheld the ownership of biological fathers over children in some cases. That is partly because of missionaries' effort to establish monogamous marriage, the nuclear family and the centrality of the biological father. As a result, the problems such as which children socially belong to matrilineal group or biological father and who should be responsible for fostering them, was left.

means by which communities could place their own members within new political and economic channels through which opportunities and resources would flow.

It is the politics of educational provision that Dennis Austin (1964) and Stephanie Newell (2000) explore. Austin (1964) stresses the centrality of primary education in attacks on the system of Indirect Rule and ultimately on colonial authority itself. He regards 'educated commoners' as a new class or a social group in the Colony and Ashanti during the post-World War II. Because of a rapid increase in the number of primary school and its pupils since the 1930s, according to him, 'It was from this broad social group of elementary-school-leavers that the leaders of the radical wing of the nationalist movement were drawn in 1949' (Austin 1964: 17)<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, these CPP supporters had been divided into two groups. The first is 'relative, that is, to the lawyers, newspaper owners, and merchants among the intelligentsia' (Austin 1964: 16). Their own jobs were schoolteachers, storekeepers, and traders. Whilst most of them had perhaps obtained Standard VII certificate, those consisting of the second group had not obtained it (or, simply junior-elementary-school leavers). They worked 'as market-stall assistants, messengers in government offices, drivers' mates, or apprentices to a master carpenter or motor fitter' (Austin 1964: 16-17). In addition, Austin (1964) continues, their resentment against native authorities (chieftaincy) promoted the emergence of mass nationalist movement. They formed a social group beyond several differences in ethnic group, occupation, religious and gender. It was based on shared difficulties, interests, and language (English) through common educational career, namely primary education. That inclusive group was vital in the movements of the CPP since the 1950s.

Newell (2000), on the other, explores how urban youth drew upon their primary schooling in order to form new networks within the towns of the Gold Coast. Newspapers indicate that school leavers would gather together to establish literary clubs. These were not explicitly political in the sense of opposing the colonial government, and as such they cannot be described as 'proto-nationalist'. Rather, club members aimed to improve themselves through reading, and they used literacy in order

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<sup>8</sup> In fact, nearly half of the members of the CPP first committee in 1949 were graduates from primary schools ('graduates 2; secondary school 3; elementary school 4') (Austin 1964: 16). Graduates from the higher level of schools than secondary, like Nkrumah, were exceptional even in the CPP.

to claim a legitimate voice, and to assert their right to participate in discussions on the issues of the day. As these club members had not completed secondary or higher education, they were socially removed from the elite of the Gold Coast towns, and were not included in institutions such as the Legislative Council, which provided for consultation between the colonial administration and a highly selective segment of the African population. Nonetheless, the primary-school leavers who formed these clubs wanted to express their opinions on the issues of the day. Newell thus considers them as part of a 'nascent civil society' in the Gold Coast towns.

At a very obvious level, then, primary education was a criterion for a mass movement that opposed the existing colonial order that sanctioned the control of commoners by chiefs. Commoners in the rural areas of both the Colony and Ashanti expected education as a whole, the act of sending children into schools in particular, to provide them with a new type of status criteria, and to reinforce the social mobility<sup>9</sup>. What this thesis seeks to demonstrate, however, is that whilst colonial education officers, and missionary providers of education, were deeply concerned by the potential for school leavers to use their literacy to challenge traditional authorities, there was another equally important process at work. This was the process by which members of the 'traditional elite' began to view education as an indispensable element in retaining their own status. As commoners became aware of the value of formal schooling in opening up new opportunities in the labour market, and new sources of status, so chiefly families could also turn to education as a means of maintaining and reinforcing their own position.

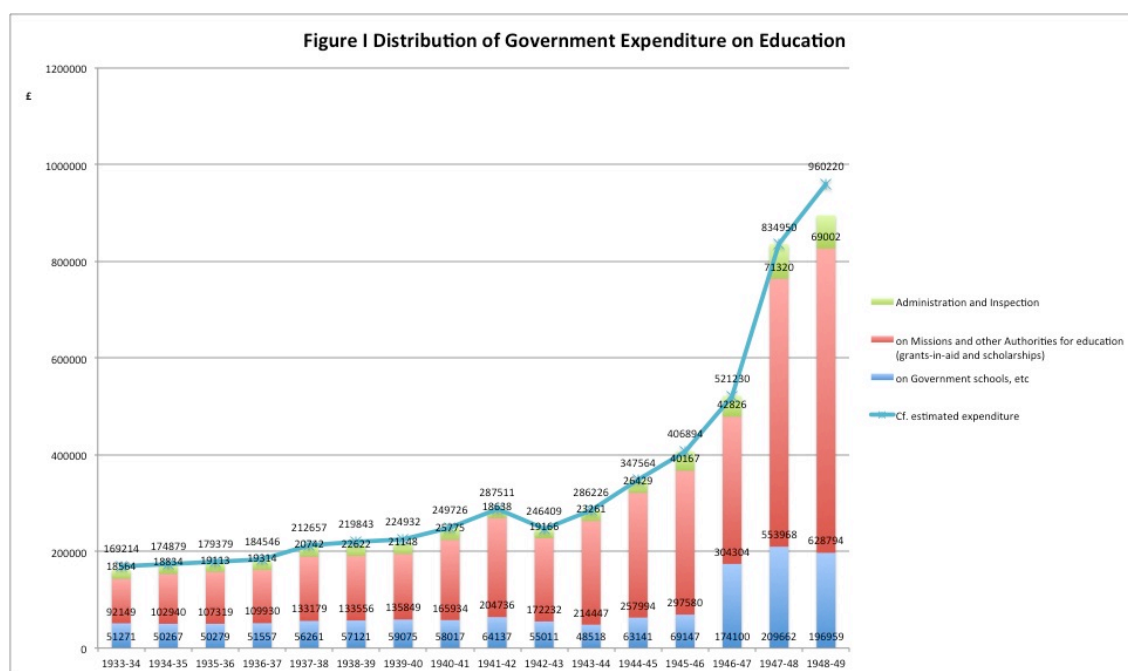
### 1-3. The Development of Education on the Initiative of both the Colonial Government and the Local Society

This section will show both quantitative and qualitative information on education in the Colony/Ashanti until 1949, collected from the annual report of the Education Department of the Colonial Government. In the metropole, there was an increasing

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<sup>9</sup> For details in the case of the Colony, see Coe (2002).

interest in education for British dependencies during the inter-war period<sup>10</sup>. According to Clive Whitehead (2005: 442), the general blueprint for colonial education during the inter-war period was composed of three aspects. First of all, the Colonial Office made lots of efforts to develop primary education, not secondary. The second aspect is so-called ‘adapted’ education: ‘the need to adapt the curriculum in African schools to bring it into line with the local environmental and culture’ (Whitehead 2005: 442)<sup>11</sup>. The ‘grants-in-aid’ system, and colonial education with the support of local society although on the initiatives of the colonial Government, are the third one. In fact, because of vulnerable financial standing, its Education Department had long concentrated on investment in people (teachers’ salaries and scholarships) or existing facilities, not the creation of educational infrastructures. Figure I below shows clearly that policy. In the Gold Coast Colony including Ashanti, the sum of Government expenditure on education did not increase rapidly until the late 1940s. Grants-in-aid and scholarships had always accounted for a large part of Government expenditure on education during 1930s-40s.

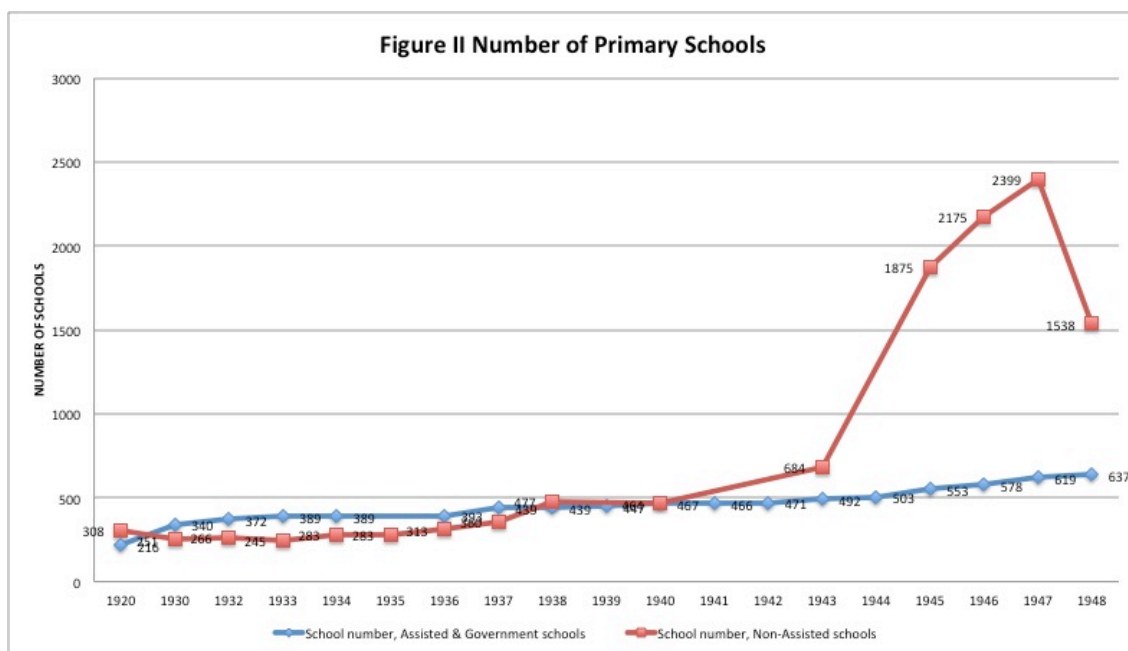


<sup>10</sup> The Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical Africa was appointed by the Colonial Office in 1923. Its aim was to ‘advise and assist the Secretary about Native Education and its progress in British tropical Africa’ (Advisory Committee 1925: 2). This organization, later renamed Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, discussed the issues and outlooks of education in African colonies.

<sup>11</sup> This blueprint resulted in the preservation of ‘tradition’ through introduced Crafts or Arts subjects in schools. At the same time, schools had been expected to regulate the influx of ‘modern’ things, value and technologies.

Source: Gold Coast Colony, *Annual Reports on the Education Department 1935-50*, Accra: Government Printer (Public Record Office, Colonial Office [hereafter, PRO, CO] 98/58-98/85).<sup>12</sup>

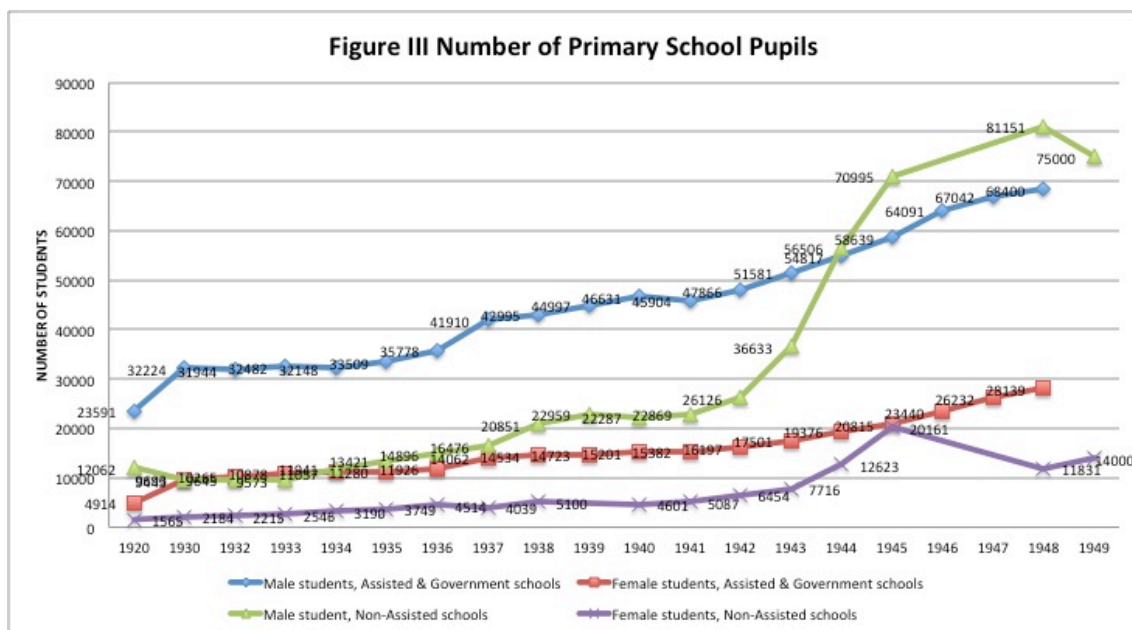
Meanwhile, there was remarkably a local interest in education within the Colony/Ashanti during the late 1940s, whose evidence was prevailing primary schools.



Source: Gold Coast Colony, *Annual Reports on the Education Department 1935-50*, Accra: Government Printer (Public Record Office, Colonial Office [hereafter, PRO, CO] 98/58-98/85).

<sup>12</sup> The Colony and Ashanti was not regarded as separated units in terms of statistics compiled and published by the Education Department. Therefore, in this thesis, these charts refer to Ashanti and the Colony. It would be difficult to identify differences between education in the Colony and Ashanti during the 1940s.





Source: Gold Coast Colony, *Annual Reports on the Education Department 1935-50*, Accra: Government Printer (Public Record Office, Colonial Office [hereafter, PRO, CO] 98/58-98/85).

As Figure II demonstrates, 'Non-Assisted' primary schools - which neither received Government grants-in-aid nor were managed by the Government - experienced rapid increase in its number since the 1940s whilst Assisted or Government schools increased steadily throughout 1930s-1940s. As far as primary school pupils is concerned, the same trend is discovered in Figure III<sup>13</sup>.

People's interest in primary schools was so intense that the expansion of primary education could not be controlled by the Education Department. Its annual reports had mentioned the effort of local society to erect primary schools although colonial officials perceived that even as a serious problem<sup>14</sup>. Considering that in Ashanti, the number of non-assisted primary schools was overwhelmingly more than assisted or Government

<sup>13</sup> Those graphs, however, are incomplete because wartime data is inadequate. Also, as inspection was implemented, the number of non-assisted primary schools and students recorded would have increased independent of actual number in each year. It is also applicable to graphs on secondary education. In particular, secondary schools had been short-lived due to its small scale in facilities and finances.

<sup>14</sup> For example, 'There is, however, a strong demand for senior education and it has not been easy to convince native Authorities and village communities of the inevitability of planned control if a further grievous fall in standards is to be avoided. There is still a tendency to press forward the opening of new senior primary schools, regardless of the needs of infant-junior schools and of inability to meet existing commitments for the natural growth and essential improvement of the present schools' (CO 98/83: *Report on the Education Department 1948-49*, p.13).

schools since 1940s in comparison with that in the Colony, the grass-roots movement that contributed to the popularization of primary education would be much larger in 1940s Ashanti. People concerned then such as missionaries recognized local society's passion for primary education, and explained it. For example, C. T. Eddy<sup>15</sup> considered the grass-roots movement as led by the 'local chiefs and communities', and identified its reason with 'denominational rivalry; if the neighbouring village had say a Presbyterian school, the chief would approach the Methodist or the Catholics for support for a new opening'<sup>16</sup>. As mentioned above (p.10), that they was able to build any type of primary school, independent of its curriculum, would be source of pride for chiefs and local people<sup>17</sup>.

Thus, Chapter 1 illuminated the relationship between politics, economy, and education in late colonial Ghana, mainly the Colony and Ashanti. What this chapter identifies, however, are some similar patterns between the Colony and Ashanti. In Chapter 2, the uniqueness of Asante will be explored.

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<sup>15</sup> See Oxford Development Records Project (1928-84) *Memorandum of C.T. Eddy* (MSS.Afr.s.1755 (9), Box III). C. T. Eddy was the Supervisor and then General Manager of the Methodist school system (1945-52); also, Assistant Director, Education department (charge of all the country's teacher-training and the opening of new colleges) (1952-57). He was appointed as a 'trekking officer', supervising its schools in the Ashanti Region with a base in Kumasi in 1945.

<sup>16</sup> Oxford Development Records Project (1928-84) *Memorandum of C.T. Eddy* (MSS.Afr.s.1755 (9), Box III), p.6.

<sup>17</sup> School building was also an economical problem for migrant cocoa farmers. Due to the system of Indirect Rule, and the use of local treasuries to provide services, it was not always obvious to farmers where they ought to be paying taxes to and what benefits they would derive. In this respect, the construction, maintenance and improvement of educational facilities could become highly political within the rural cocoa-producing areas of Ashanti, whilst the payment of school fees similarly altered dynamics of power within extended and nuclear families.

## Chapter 2 Chiefs' and Asantehene's crisis, and comeback

### 2-1. Social crisis from the bottom: *Akonkofo* and *Nkwankwaa*

Kwame Arhin (1986: 25) describes *Akonkofo* as 'an intermediary group between office holders and non-holders of office' emerging in colonial Asante. Originally, this referred to traders moving into coastal or northern areas<sup>18</sup> and returning to Ashanti region after 1896 when Asantehene Prempeh I was arrested; then, under the colonial rule, rich men, cocoa farmers, and successful businessmen, were also described as *Akonkofo*. In general, they welcomed British colonial rule in Asante society. They expected it to protect their individual property/wealth against chiefs<sup>19</sup> and communal property/wealth management in pre-colonial society.

These were the first Asantes to embrace western education. Even though many *Akonkofo* were illiterate or not educated, their children and nephews were sent to schools, in Kumasi at first, then in coastal areas, in order to receive post-primary education. Arhin (1986: 28) suggests that going to schools meant 'to rebel against lawful authority, that is, to join the Europeans' for most of Asante people. As adults, some of these children of the *Akonkofo* did indeed go on to become politicians who were embroiled in anti-chieftaincy politics<sup>20</sup>.

*Nkwankwaa* is youngmen. McCaskie (2006: 350) describes 'those excluded from the elite of chiefship and business wealth, [who] formed the nucleus of an emerging professional and commercial middle class of teachers, journalists, pastors, pharmacists, storekeepers, clerks, and all the rest.' The emergence of this group in Asante politics, economy and society, was very closely related to the fact that during 1940s, more and more Asante people acquired access to western education, technologies and ways of

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<sup>18</sup> Trading in large scale was the monopoly of Asantehene and Amanhene until late 19th century. See Arhin (1986).

<sup>19</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Asantehene levied death duties (i.e. taxes) so that much of the wealth of individuals reverted back to the Asante state on their death. This was something that Asante commoners began to contest in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, and especially with the onset of British rule in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. See McCaskie (1986).

<sup>20</sup> However, some of *Akonkofo* became chiefs or chiefs' inner circles. This reflects the difficulties in defining who was *Akonkofo*.

life which only *Akonkofo* and chiefly families could experience before the 1930s. Austin (1964) drew an explicit connection between the *Nkwankwaa* and the primary school leavers as part of the same emergent political group which tended to support the CPP. More recently, according to McCaskie (2006: 351), *Nkwankwaa* were 'often well-born men who felt unjustly excluded from right to office, wealth, and political power, leading emergence of alternative, non-elite modernist identity.' Again then, the categories of chiefs, *Akonkofo*, and *Nkwankwaa* were complex and did not always exist in straightforward opposition to one another. For example, Isaiah Afrifah Agyei (member of Mampong Literary Club, whose death was reported in 1942) 'belonged to the Babiru branch of the Mampon[g] royal family and was educated in Kumasi. Thereafter, he worked as a storekeeper and timber merchant before becoming an importer of Dodge trucks' (McCaskie 2006: 352).

To sum up, the actual creation of chiefs and their relative positionings vis-à-vis each other changed significantly as a result of colonial conquest and the shift towards indirect rule, and this is true for many parts of Ghana and indeed other African colonies, although the case of Asante is particularly interesting. Access to the position of chief or court functionary in Asante was not determined wholly / exclusively / rigidly by genealogy, and individuals could use new skills and experiences (including literacy and education) to generate wealth, thus acquiring a form of status that enhanced their prospects of success in the competition for chiefly office or a position as a functionary at court. There were however some limits to the ability of individuals to project themselves into chiefly office, and some individuals were always excluded, leaving open the possibility either for opposition to chieftaincy per se, or to opposition to particular chiefs and their decisions. Across southern Ghana, as Rathbone (2000) has shown, because chiefs and their councillors acquired new powers in the Native Authority structure, including powers to levy fines on their subjects in court, commoners frequently complained about the 'tyranny' that chiefs exercised over them. Educated commoners thus criticized chiefs as 'archaic' and 'tyrannical'. In the Asante case, chieftaincy also remained important because it was tightly tied up with access to economic resources, especially land. Stools own land in Asante (which is not the case in all parts of Ghana). Once the cocoa boom took off, chiefs could access land on which to build their own personal farms, and they could also charge rents and fees to migrant farmers who

wished to use stool land, thus enriching their stool. Although in practice the supposed separation between personal wealth and stool wealth could be very blurry, and this itself was often a source of much disagreement. Land owned within towns also increased in value, and chiefs could rent out or sell such land to urban property developers. Thus whilst there were alternative ways of acquiring wealth and status in Asante (e.g. through education, trade, the professions), and these might assist some individuals in the competition to become a chief, the control of chiefs over land meant that there were particular forms economic activity that could not be effectively pursued by individuals who were excluded from chiefly office or were not able to negotiate good terms from a chief.

## 2-2. Political crisis from the outside: Indirect Rule reviewed

From the perspective of local governance, both the colonial government and nationalist elites were inspired to examine indirect rule and chiefs' functions in it. Until mid-1940s, colonial officials had perceived chiefs as untouchable and regarded them as 'natural' 'traditional' rulers – a term which was embraced by the chiefs themselves. By World War II, criticism of chieftaincy was manifested in the frequent destoolments of chiefs. Indeed, it was reported to the colonial government that there was an increase in chiefs' injustice, abuse of power, briberies heavy taxation, and being autocratic<sup>21</sup>.

Finally, reforms in chieftaincy and the indirect rule were carried out since 1944 when the Native Authority Ordinance and Native Court Ordinance<sup>22</sup> were brought into effect. According to Rathbone (2000), the attitude of the colonial government reflected a fear that chiefs might become hindrances to colonial development. Although such development was to be partly or initially financed by the Colonial Development and

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<sup>21</sup> See Rathbone (2000) and Austin (1964). Also, he pleads chiefs' corrupt practices. In local society where new social norms and values were prevailing gradually, chiefs needed visible prestige, including accumulated wealth and successful business, instead of their historical and religious sanctity.

<sup>22</sup> In the Native Authority Ordinance, Native Authorities and State Councils were created respectively. The former's constitution and finance were under the jurisdiction of the colonial central Government. On the other, State Councils were controlled by chiefs, and clearly separated from Native Authorities and administration. Native Court Ordinance attempted to redress chiefs' and chiefly elites' wrongs over native jurisdiction in tribunals whose membership were hereditary in principle. See Rathbone (2000).

Welfare Act in 1941, it was felt that development over the longer term required a more 'modern' form of political authority than that provided by chiefs. Subsequently, in preparing for draft a new constitution of the Gold Coast Colony, the colonial government proposed that the majority of Legislative Council members should be people other than chiefs. In contrast, even after 1946, chiefs in the Colony showed opposition to the expectation of the colonial Government. The Joint Provincial Council elected 2 non-chiefs and 7 chiefs as Legislative Council members (Rathbone 2000: 19).

Urban riots throughout towns of the Colony and Ashanti in 1948 accelerated the pace of reform in chieftaincy. That is because the Watson Commission, appointed to investigate the causes of the riots, identified the hostility of local people to chiefs. Consequently, the Coussey Commission<sup>23</sup>, which was established in order to reframe the constitution again, attempted to reduce chiefs' powers, even though it tried to strike a compromise. For example, in that constitution, Native Authorities controlled by chiefs were to be reformed into Local Councils, only one third of whose seats were assigned to chiefs. State Councils of chiefs and elders were thoroughly segregated from Local Councils, and its jurisdiction was restricted to customary law and stool affairs.

In this process of transformation, there was competition over political rights. As Rathbone (2000) points out, nationalist elites mainly from coastal areas, who had been excluded from colonial administration, accused chiefs of being an inappropriate agency of local administration. On the other hand, the commoners and primary school leavers, who had been denied a voice in local politics (administration, economy, and social aspects) sought out those rights, sometimes by supporting political parties like the CPP, but also by asserting themselves as opinion leaders in literary and social clubs, and hometown improvement associations, which were based around a shared literacy in English (although not always to a secondary or post-secondary school level).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Gerald Creasy, a governor of the Gold Coast Colony, showed his support to chiefs just before the riots in February to March 1948 even though it might be surface. Ashanti Pioneer on 15th January 1948 reports as follow: 'I [Governor Gerald Creasy] shall give my fullest support to the Chiefs and their Councils' 'entrust to them [chiefs] additional duties' 'The Chiefs and their Councils will thus become increasingly responsible for the welfare and progress of their people.' Also, 'I [Creasy] believe stoolocracy has been very effective as it is, in the formation of our native States' (*Ashanti Pioneer* 5 February 1948)

<sup>24</sup> For details about those clubs, see Newell (2006).

There is some evidence that the criticism of chiefs from non-chiefly people was more radical in Ashanti rather than the Gold Coast Colony<sup>25</sup>. For example, the Asante Youth Association (AYA) was established in 1947. Its members were clearly commoners other than chiefs and chiefly elites<sup>26</sup>. Among them, Krobo Edusei<sup>27</sup> was quite famous as 'the best-known anticolonial activist in Kumasi' (McCaskie 2006: 341), and also the representative of CPP in Ashanti (Rathbone 2000). After the 1948 riots, ACC accused him of agitating Asante people for anti-colonial and anti-chieftaincy movement (Austin 1964: 78-79). Indeed, Ashanti Pioneer on 23th March 1948 reported that he had been arrested on the grounds that he had organized the boycott, agitated the crowd, and threatened public safety. AYA strongly claimed that the responsibility for Self-Government should be shouldered by commoners not chiefs or chiefly elites. Likewise, they expected CPP to sympathise with AYA's demand for participation in politics (Tordoff 1968; Austin 1964). There were those clubs organized in the other towns of Ashanti region. Mampong Literary Club was inaugurated in 1938 with the support of Mamponhene<sup>28</sup>. One of its member, for example, was Ata Mensa who was known as an enemy of Prempeh II and a CPP supporter (McCaskie 2006: 351). It schemed to repeal chiefship itself, including the position of the Mamponhene.

On the other hand, the question about chiefs' legitimacy and roles was frequently discussed on the pages of the *Ashanti Pioneer* during late 1940s. As with claims from both the colonial Government and commoners, most articles focused on whether chiefs were a suitable local agency for development and governance. However, most articles of Ashanti Pioneer did not directly criticise chiefs, and never denied chiefs' status and roles. Rather, some articles took a more complex or subtle position, arguing that chiefs

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<sup>25</sup> For example, see Rathbone (2000). Asante Youth Association (AYA) was out of CPP's control although AYA supported CPP.

<sup>26</sup> Austin (1964: 56) investigates that its secretary-general was Atta Mensah (storekeeper), and the other leading members were Bediako Poku (school teacher), J.K. Bonsu (trader), B.D. Addai (merchant). However, Cobina Kessie might be an exception because he was a lawyer and the member of United Gold Coast Convention, political organization for intelligentsia. It will need further consideration.

<sup>27</sup> He had worked at the Abura Printing Works which published daily newspapers in Ashanti, Ashanti Pioneer, under the edition of J.W.Tsiboe.

<sup>28</sup> It would be unique situation. Mampong was historically against Asantehene and Kumasi within Ashanti Confederacy.

should not directly participate in politics and actual administration in order to retain their traditional prestige. For example,

Our country is growing fast, and in so far as the ordinary people feel you [chiefs] should be relieved to your public services not because they disrespect you but because they want to restore to you your ancient dignity and respectability (*Ashanti Pioneer* 2 January 1948).

He [Chief] is in principle immune and traditionally inaccessible to direct speech. ... Now chiefs in effect CIVIL SERVANTS and the speed with which they are placed on Committees quite proves that their most sacred obligations are getting moribund. If we consider how Council debates are conducted we who hold guide in our chiefs are tormented with serious pain as to the magnitude to which the chiefs have allowed their sacred rights to be impaired. In the Councils they are treated without their LINGUISTS ... They are degraded to the level of the common man! ... The sanctity of our chiefs, when they accommodate themselves in professional politics, is absolute farce. ... When chiefs make politics their vocation, they obviously leave themselves wide to criticism and unpolished remarks. They are under constant suspicion by the multitude. The old order must change and yield place to new, perhaps, but we wonder if we outlived our chieftaincy yet? (*Ashanti Pioneer* 7 January 1948).

Also, discussion in the newspaper extended to qualifications for politicians.

I think a good reason why path finders in political matters are more or less professional can be found in the simple fact that they ought to have specific qualifications (*Ashanti Pioneer* 9 January 1948).

Although people had not reached a consensus on qualifications, clearly secondary school leavers were demanded in Native Authorities.

The personnel of the Native Administration should not fall ...[below] that of the Central Government not only in qualifications but also in general conditions of service. This was indisputably the strong conviction of the late Nana Sir Ofori Atta I when he



advocated that secondary school scholars be recruited into the Native Administration on as near Government conditions of Service as possible (*Ashanti Pioneer* 29 January 1948).

Whether or not, it appears that some contributors and editors of *Ashanti Pioneer* considered chiefs as inappropriate to assume administration services in the future Self-Government. That contention was proved even from the aspect of traditional qualifications or legitimacy.

What was being suggested in this article was that a kind of compromise. Chiefs could step back from day-to-day administrative work and political debate, which required more 'modern' skills. But the chiefs (or rather their stools) would still retain other forms of power (such as control over the use of stool land and the levying of rents on migrants who wished to use it). Thus the prestige of chiefs could be maintained, and even the economic basis of the power of stools would be maintained. If the more highly educated young men could be employed as administrators serving the Native Authorities, and could be paid good money for their work, this would re-integrate the school leavers into the system which kept chiefs at its pinnacle. When school leavers could not find this type of work in Asante within the Native Authorities, two problems would arise. Firstly, the young school leavers would go to the towns, including the coastal towns, becoming disconnected from their home areas, and entering into new lifestyles which caused them to be 'disrespectful' to their elders and to chiefs. Secondly, the chiefs themselves would not be able to demonstrate that they could successfully administer their areas or bring development, because the Native Authorities would be lacking in educated skilled manpower. Thus bringing school leavers (including the more highly skilled secondary school leavers) INTO the Native Authorities to work on good terms and conditions was a proposal that was suggested for easing the tensions between chiefs and the educated commoners, and combining 'traditional' authority of chiefs with 'modern' skills. This could be seen as a strategy for preserving chieftaincy, and protecting it against political radicalism, by ensuring that the most highly educated commoners were given a well-paid and respectable role within the system. This would prevent the more highly educated commoners from becoming so radicalized and dissatisfied that they would

unite with the 'rabble' (i.e. the mere primary school leavers or the illiterate commoners) against the chiefs.

### 2-3. Chiefs' and Asantehene's rally: restored Ashanti Confederacy Council

Tordoff (1968) considers that the implementation of indirect rule in Ashanti had some particular characteristics. Since 1896, when Asantehene Prempeh I and chiefs in Kumasi were arrested, Kumasi experienced collapse. It was newly governed by a native administration, later Kumasi Council of Chiefs established in 1905. The British Government deprived Kumasi chiefs of their control over subject areas outside Kumasi itself.<sup>29</sup> These policies triggered the rebellion among remaining Kumasi chiefs in 1900.

In 1926, the Colonial Office and Guggisberg, Governor of the British Gold Coast Colony, agreed that Prempeh I, Asantehene in exile, could return to Ashanti as not Asantehene but only as Kumasihene (the head chief of Kumasi).<sup>30</sup> Thereafter most chiefs attempted to rehabilitate Prempeh I as Asantehene, and to reconstruct the Ashanti Confederacy. In contrast to them with the support of H. S. Newlands, the chief commissioner of Ashanti, there were 2 opposing groups: the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast Colony claimed that Ashanti and the Gold Coast Colony should not be administered separately; also, some head chiefs of states<sup>31</sup> opposed to the restoration of the Ashanti Confederacy. This opposition was not wholly successful and the Ashanti Confederacy was restored in 1935 with Prempeh II as Asantehene.

However, it should be noted that this Confederacy was not exactly the same as that in the pre-colonial period. As Triulzi (1972) shows, the constituents of the Confederacy admitted in 1935 were 15 divisions<sup>32</sup> which were originally Asante's chiefdoms, in other

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<sup>29</sup> Previously, the Ashanti empire (Confederacy) consisted of Kumasi as capital and central state, surrounding states whose head chiefs were Amanhene, subject areas outside them, and dependent provinces. See Tordoff (1968).

<sup>30</sup> The colonial government expected his return to settle down disorder in Kumasi where hostility to British rule was still profound.

<sup>31</sup> The reason for the opposition was that Mampong, Bekwai, Ejisu, were autonomous, and that the Brong states were organized by the colonial Government.

<sup>32</sup> They were Kumasi, Mampong, Juaben, Bekwai, Essumegya, Kokofu, Nsuta, Adonse, Kumawu, Offinso, Ejisu, Agona, Banda, Mo, and Wenkyi, most of which were around Kumasi as

words, only the nucleus of the Confederacy. The colonial government so carefully took into consideration some states which opposed the restored Ashanti Confederacy that it provided that even Asantehene should not interfere with internal affairs of each division. The colonial government later withdrew this provision in 1943, which meant that Asantehene could interfere with all matters in each division, including the enstoolment and destoolment of chiefs. Clearly, this decision implied collision between Asantehene, the Asante Confederacy Council, the Amanhene and local people.

Moreover, there were disputes over the membership of chiefs. The seats in the Ashanti Confederacy Council (ACC), which was established as a native authority in the Ashanti region, were occupied by Asantehene, Amanhene of each division, seven Kumasi chiefs (Nsafohene)<sup>33</sup> and the representatives of ordinary people, namely 'educated commoners'. Meanwhile, some states, such as the Brong states, were newly invented by the colonial government; therefore, they were not assigned seats in the ACC even though they were a part of the Ashanti region established by the colonial government. Fundamentally, the Asantehene did not have rights to create new chiefs, and appoint them as members of the ACC. In fact, there were unofficial members as divisional chiefs who were not recognized by the colonial government, but attended the ACC meeting. In the reorganization of the ACC in 1947 some of them were authorised under the name of Asantehene to its official membership. At the same time, the number of members increased from 22 to 54 in accordance with population of each area. Kumasi obtained many more representatives than the other divisions,<sup>34</sup> and this Kumasi-centred political structure stimulated further unrest among the other states, especially new states. For example, Brong states such as Dormaa and Takyiman claimed detachment from the Ashanti region in 1951 and 1956 respectively. In 1958, a separate Brong-Ahafo region was established in that area under the auspices of the independent government of Kwame Nkrumah.

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capital. Their territories were much smaller than the former Ashanti Confederacy, and even the Ashanti region in colonial administration. For further detail, see Triulzi (1972: 99).

<sup>33</sup> They were Akwamuhene, Krontihene, Adantenhene, Oyokohene, Gyasehene, Kyidamhene, Ankobiahene.

<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, Asantehene could nominate one fifth seats.

Thus, Asante chiefs were deeply incorporated into their own complex and contested hierarchy, with the Asantehene at its pinnacle. These circumstances make it quite difficult to refer to a straightforward category 'chief', partly because the title 'chief' had been conferred by both the colonial government and the ACC at different times, and because status of chiefs, like the membership of the ACC, was unstable. The chiefs' status had become tangled with the politics of not only within the restored ACC, but also between the ACC and the colonial government, within the broader framework of indirect rule. 'Chiefs', then, were deeply engaged in competition for power, status, and even legitimacy.

Asante chiefs were sensitive to those pressures<sup>35</sup> and took several provisions against the threats to their own status by late 1940s. As for the policy of ACC and Asantehene Prempeh II, some educated commoners were captured on their side. While the Joint Provincial Council elected more chiefs rather than non-chiefs as members of Legislative Council, the ACC chose 3 non-chiefs and 1 chief. However, it is remarkable that this policy could be under the context that Ashanti felt a sense of rivalry against the Colony in its position within central Government. Austin (1964: 52) mentions that chiefs and chiefly elites experienced fewer conflicts than them in coastal area. In the re-organization of ACC in 1947, Prempeh II appointed 4 educated commoners from Kumasi as members of the ACC's Executive Committee. Triulzi (1972) points out that the influence of educated commoners upon Prempeh II and chiefs was intensified thereafter. The Executive Committee was newly established as an advisory institution for the Asantehene in 1947. 4 commoners were Asafu Adjaye brothers, I.K. Agyeman, and B.D. Addai. In 1950, 2 Kumasi chiefs were replaced by 2 commoners, C.E. Osei and C. Kessie (Triulzi 1972). Asafu Adjaye brothers (lawyer and doctor) were supported by their uncle, Kwame Frimpon (1860-1937). Kwame Frimpon was Adontenhene in Kumasi, and also prominent businessman. He was also Methodist and literate in English. (McCaskie 2006: 348) In some respects, Kwame Frimpon was similar to akonkofo with the exception that he was literate. More importantly, ACC under the direction of Prempeh II took measures to prevent the instability of chiefs' status. Prempeh II was apprehensive that their participation in politics would threaten him and

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<sup>35</sup> When ACC accused Krobo Edusei mentioned above, chiefs were obviously worried that he might enhance his own political powers, and surpass chiefs. (Austin 1964: 78-80)

chieftaincy. ACC prohibited nkwankwaa from forming any clubs and organizations (McCaskie 2006).

On the one hand, the ACC was concerned to bring in the akonkofo and prevent them from allying themselves with the less educated and less wealthy commoners. At the same time, however, the ACC also expressed some anxiety about the need to rein in the opportunities for the akonkofo to make displays of wealth that outshone those of the chiefs, or undermined chiefs' prestige. Whereas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, opportunities to generate wealth, particularly through long-distance trade, were tightly controlled by the Asante state, the situation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century began to change. Thus despite the continuing control of stools over land, such land became valuable precisely because it could be rented out or even sold to migrant cocoa farmers, or urban property developers (depending on location). Arhin (1995) explains that Asante society was rapidly monetized through the expansion of cocoa production, prevailing taxation system, and the inclusion of land, labour and capital into market. The monetization of society advanced in spheres such as education, litigation, and the rites of passage (funeral and marriage). Until then, wealth had been a symbol of chiefs and officeholders and monopolized by them. To rein in or moderate displays of wealth by those who were not chiefs, the ACC enforced regulations on payment on marriage, funeral rites, and sale or purchase of stools.<sup>36</sup> It promoted the amount of expenditure on marriage in accordance with status, prevented rich men but non-chiefs from paying more for marriage than chiefs. That was the case in expenditure for funeral rites. Moreover, it established a provision that stool elders who received bribes from candidates for chiefship should be tried.

In fact, it was difficult to regulate those commoners' activities. However, chiefs were keenly aware that chieftaincy itself had been confronted with crisis or instability because of non-chiefs. The establishment of Prempeh College should be seen as part of a series of comebacks undertaken by chiefs. Prempeh College and secondary education played

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<sup>36</sup> By the 1940s, stool elders, whose nomination was necessary for candidates to obtain chiefship, often received bribes. That problem was also associated with the claim of Asantehene as ultimate arbitrator in enstoolments and destoolments of chiefs.

the same role in maintaining, reinforcing, or altering chiefship as innovations such as the written obituary, whose significance has been investigated by McCaskie (2006).

## Chapter 3 Secondary School for Chiefs and Asantehene, Prempeh College

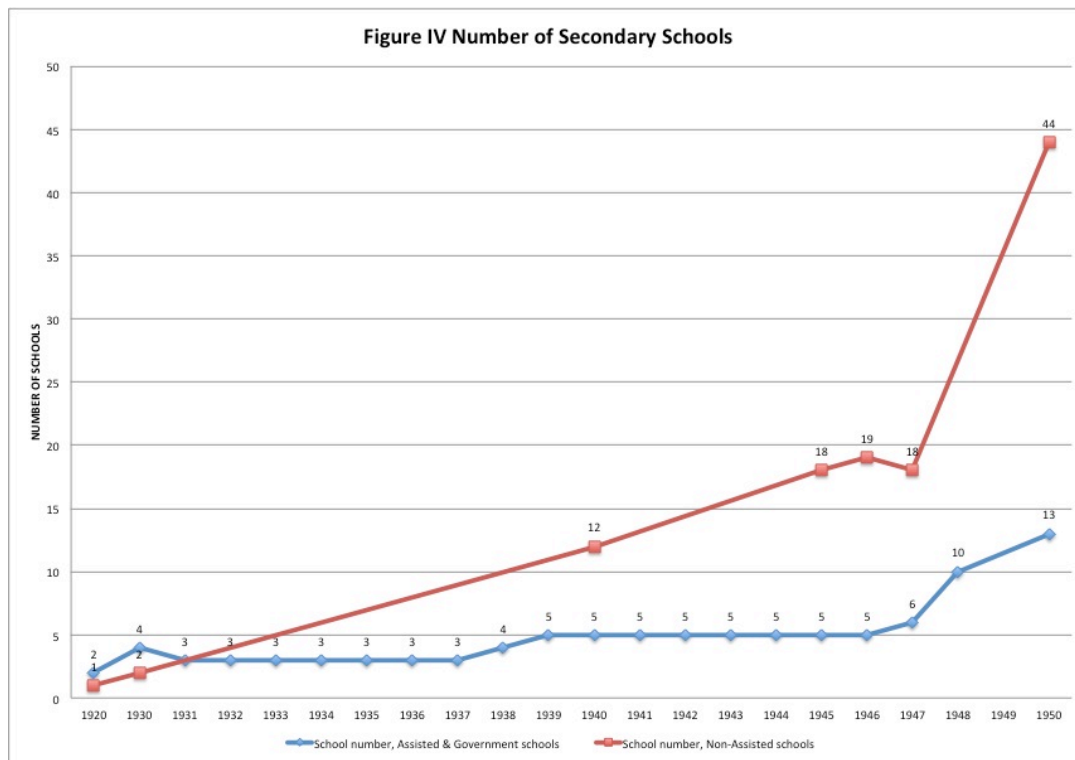
Asante society seems to have rapidly accepted western education since the 1930s-40s. Foster (1965: 124) claims that the number of schools in Ashanti region increased quite slowly during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century because chiefs in particular were reluctant to send children to school. However, the annual report of the Education Department about 1935-36 mentions that some progressive chiefs, along with farsighted councillors, had understood the usefulness of western education in making citizens and training people who had occupational skills or an aptitude for agriculture in late 1930s (CO 96/733/23: *Report on the Education Department 1935-36*, p.8). Also, C.T. Eddy indicated that between 1945 and 1952, schools in Ashanti were erected mainly under the initiative of local chiefs and people<sup>37</sup>.

### 3-1. Limited Opportunities for Secondary Education

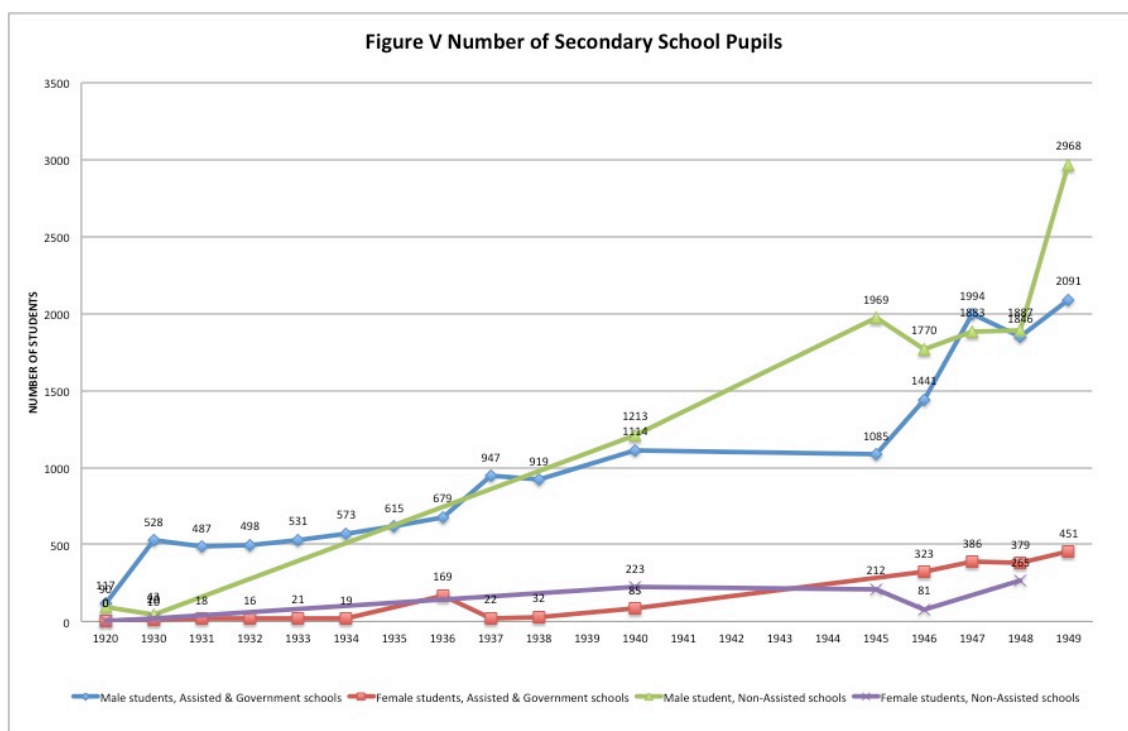
Figures IV and V below show trends in the numbers of secondary schools and pupils, and these share the same upward trend that we saw in relation to primary school in the graphs in Chapter 1.

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<sup>37</sup> Oxford Development Records Project (1928-84) *Memorandum of C.T. Eddy* (MSS.Afr.s.1755 (9), Box III).



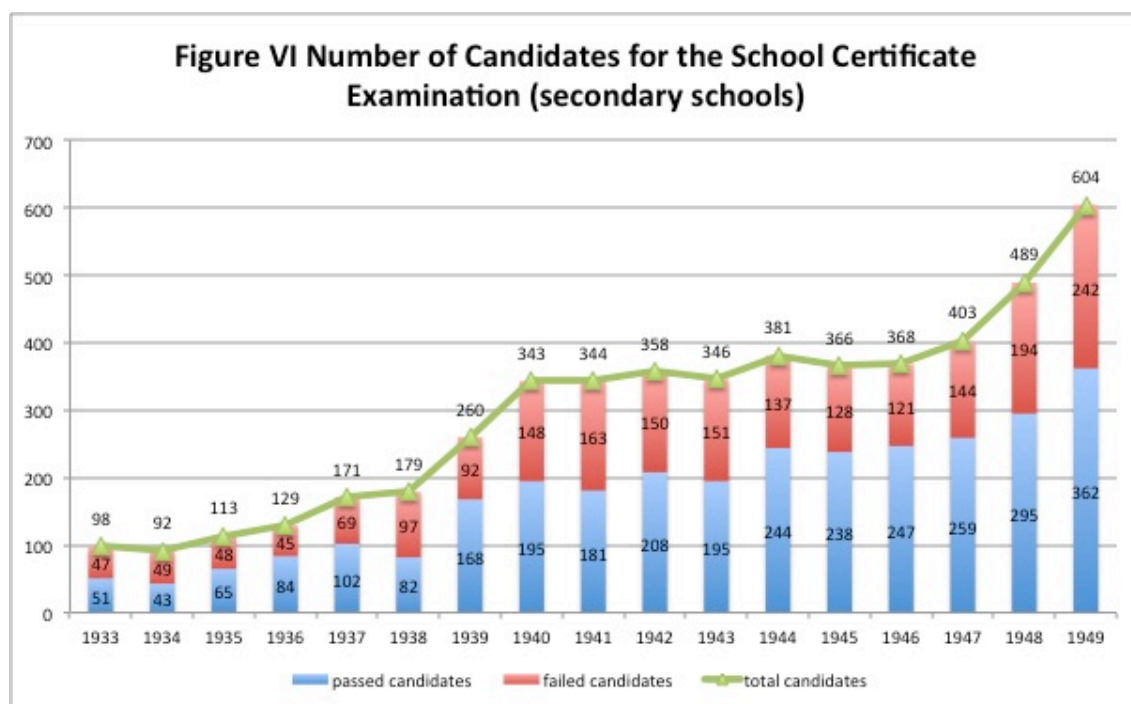
Source: Gold Coast Colony, *Annual Reports on the Education Department 1935-50*, Accra: Government Printer (Public Record Office, Colonial Office [hereafter, PRO, CO] 98/58-98/85).



Source: Gold Coast Colony, *Annual Reports on the Education Department 1935-50*, Accra: Government Printer (Public Record Office, Colonial Office [hereafter, PRO, CO] 98/58-98/85).



However, as far as the absolute value in the numbers of schools and pupils is concerned, primary education was superior to secondary education. As Figure VI shows, the number of candidates for School Certificates Examination of secondary schools had been even limited. Even among the students attending secondary school, a significant portion was unable to become candidates for the School Certificate Examination, let alone to pass the Examination. It was common that the students dropped out of secondary school.



Source: Gold Coast Colony, *Annual Reports on the Education Department 1935-50*, Accra: Government Printer (Public Record Office, Colonial Office [hereafter, PRO, CO] 98/58-98/85).

Thus, secondary schools in the Colony/Ashanti remained few in number, but during the 1940s the Colonial Government undertook the curriculum reform in secondary education, and local people became increasingly keen to construct their own 'non-assisted' secondary schools.

Associated with 'war effort' and the industrialization of local society, curriculum at the secondary education level was gradually adapted in favour of technical, vocational and 'applied' education. Existing secondary schools, most of which were located in the Colony, had embraced different curricula until the late 1930s-1940s. For example, curriculum in Achimota College was concerned with the preservation of tradition (e.g.,

folklore, dance, drum, etc), not necessarily associated with the ideal of industrialization. During World War II, the annual reports edited by the Education Department mention that secondary schools had become small-scale factories or laboratories for industrialization<sup>38</sup>. The Education Department was no longer promoting and preserving traditional or small-scaled handiwork. Rather, the development of machinery industries, and the improvement - modernization - of agriculture and traditional arts were demanded. And this modernization required manpower with skills in science and technology, namely technocrats who initiate the policy for national and local development with scientific knowledge<sup>39</sup>. Thus, applied curriculum in even general secondary schools was encouraged by means of additional grants-in-aid for science laboratory and facilities<sup>40</sup>.

Meanwhile, *Ashanti Pioneer* (9 February 1949: 2) points out local demand for secondary education in the Colony and Ashanti.

But at the moment the Secondary Schools are too few in the country, and private individuals who are endeavouring to fill up the gaps by opening up secondary schools hardly ever receive any encouragement from Government. Yet the numerous applications for admission received at such unassisted secondary schools clearly indicate the immense need for secondary education in the country.

How about vocational education? For example, exhibitions for handiworks and farm products were frequently held at local schools in Ashanti region. For example, *Ashanti Pioneer* (3 January 1948: 2) contained an article on Mponua (Southern Ashanti)

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<sup>38</sup> For example, see CO 98/74: *Reports on the Education Department* 1938-39, p.34; CO 98/78: *Reports on the Education Department* 1941-42, p.1 and 3. Again, at not only the secondary but also primary education level, the same current seems to have existed. In Ashanti, a craftwork contest between schools was held in 1940 (CO 98/78: *Reports on the Education Department* 1941-42, p.1).

<sup>39</sup> However, there was a large gap between local demand for secondary education and that reform. Local people had indifference toward the contents of new curriculum. Rather, the most important for them was a fact that they entered traditional, namely academic secondary schools, not new scientific. It meant that traditional (in the metropole) but new (for local people) type of education was considered as a status symbol (Yamada 2005). In that sense, new curriculum was neither able to adapt itself to transforming local society, nor to lead or control social transformation.

<sup>40</sup> For details, see Gold Coast Education Committee (1942: 12 and 20); CO 98/75: *Report on the Education Department* 1939-40, pp.5-6; CO 98/80: *Report on the Education Department* 1945-46, p.2. Again, those curriculum reform in colonial Ghana had financially been supported by the trend of metropole, the Colonial Development and Welfare Act.

Schools Handwork Exhibition held by Methodist rural schools, where Kumasi District Commissioner, Assistant District Commissioner, School Manager, and chiefs as proxy for Asantehene Prempeh II, were present. Nana Manwerehene, on behalf of Prempeh II, 'points out how interested the Asantehene was in things made with the hands.' (*Ashanti Pioneer* 3 January 1948: 2) Also, in 1948, a Commercial Institute was established at Kumasi. Undoubtedly, these movements advanced the development of vocational education in Ashanti like the Gold Coast Colony during the 1940s.

*Ashanti Pioneer* discusses on industrial education and development in several articles contributed during late 1940s. There was an assumption that education curriculum should be 'localized', in other words, adapted to local needs and conditions. However, *Ashanti Pioneer's* articles illuminate the difficulties or diversity in defining which type of subjects should be a priority. An editorial (*Ashanti Pioneer* 15 January 1948: 2) was of an opinion that 'Living as we do in an essentially agricultural country, it is only reasonable, let alone natural, to mould at best part of our system of education on lines that reckon substantially with the complex requirements of modern agriculture.' In contrast, S. J. Kerssey-Adu, a contributor, (*Ashanti Pioneer* 9 January 1948: 2) insists on sending 'deserving youngmen and women to Europe to study trades with a view to establishing manufacturing enterprises,' and continuously says:

statistics of Gold Coast students in Europe show that a great proportion of these students have either law or medicine in view. I wonder whether we are aiming at making the Gold Coast of tomorrow a nation of litigants or what? I think that, considering the high standard of our advancement, we should now take a wide view of our surroundings and make provisions not only for technicians, agriculturists, but particularly for Artisans and others such as shoemakers, gold smiths, black smiths, carpenters, masons, etc. All these traders are indispensable in the making of a nation.

At the same time, *Ashanti Pioneer* keenly criticized the popular perception of vocational education, worrying that the inferiority of manual labour and vocational training to deskwork and academic education had persistently remained among people in Ashanti region.

THERE is a popular complaint in this country about the tendency to place far too much significance on academic education at the expense of technical education. This complaint, which we share, is considered both reasonable and understandable. Now, what are the facts of the case? We as a people have failed to demonstrate our respect, if at all, for technically educated men. ... Do we treat our doctors with half the respect we pay to our lawyers and men with BAs and other academic appendage? Has Govt. ever held out to our doctors the prospect of becoming Assistant Director of Medical Services just as our academic men become Deputy Director of Education, Clerk of the Legislative Council, or Puisne Judge? What is the highest post so far attained by African in the Geological Survey, Survey, Public Works, Electrical and Medical Departments? ... Do we encourage technical education by awarding Government scholarships for training in Social Welfare in the UK and, comparatively speaking, ignoring Forestry, Afrigulture, Electrical Engineering, Engineering Chemistry, Animal Health and the like? It must be appreciated that few human beings will deign to qualify as architects, electrical engineers, surveyors, veterinary officers if they realize that they will not be treated with half the respect and enthusiasm usually shown to academicians. (*Ashanti Pioneer* 23 January 1948: 2)

THERE CAN BE no dispute about the fact that academic education has, in this country, shot miles ahead of vocational training. We are only too familiar with the consequent ills of such a state of affairs to deem it necessary even to attempt to appraise the precise need for vocational training today. Our best carpenters, masons, farmers and other mechanics are comparatively illiterate. For this reason the tendency has been reared in the average school boy that these vocations are the exclusive province of the illiterate to whom he unfortunately judges himself superior. (*Ashanti Pioneer* 11 March 1948: 2)

### 3-2. 'official' secondary school and chiefs: the case of the Prempeh College

Under those circumstances, Prempeh College was erected in Kumasi in 1949. In writing the biography of J.A. Kufuor, McCaskie (2009: 458) describes that secondary school as

'a local alternative to elite schools in the Gold Coast', and he mentions that 'if it lacked the cachet of those older institutions it made up for it by offering its students networking opportunities among Asante's future leaders. Prempeh College had an active old boys' association that fostered lifetime links between its elite Asante alumni.' This section will focus on the ethos of this secondary school, in other words, the aim of establishing this secondary school and who enjoyed benefits from that College. What kinds of skills and attributes did students and their parents expect the school to foster? Also, what did pupils and their parents or guardians anticipate in studying at and sending children to the College?

Prempeh College was different from the other older secondary schools either in the Colony or Ashanti region. Its buildings depended on a new trend, the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940. Rev. T. A. Beetham recalled this Act and its Fund, and pointed out that the Fund implemented by the Act contributed to the buildings of Prempeh College<sup>41</sup>. Even though Beetham points out that there had not been secondary schools in Ashanti region at all, Ashanti Pioneer covers invisible efforts:

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<sup>41</sup> See Oxford Development Records Project (1928-84) *Memorandum of T. A. Beetham* (MSS.Afr.s.1755 (4)). Rev. T. A. Beetham was a Circuit minister of Methodist in Ashanti villages (1932-34) and then the head teacher of Wesley College, which was a teacher training college at Kumasi (1935-36 and 1939-48). According to him: 'The Colonial Development and Welfare Act, of May 1940, had a significant impact on pre-independence Educational Development in Ghana. ... The Act set up the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund which provided British Government money for a wide range of new capital developments in the field of Welfare. My memory is that the Fund could not be used for the on-going current support of these schemes, and that its use for people rather than buildings was largely limited to training, through its Scholarships section. Thomas Barton, Director of Education, Ghana, was immediately seized of the opportunity the Fund offered, and in May (?), 1943 sent out his Circular 4121/1 to the Heads of all Mission Education Units. ... The circular asked for Mission plans for development of their whole education programme, Primary, Secondary and Teacher Training. ... The first impact of the CDW Fund felt was in scholarships available to the UK. Those previously available from local sources had been very limited. ... The impact of the capital building programme took longer to make itself felt. Both the capital aspect and the on-going current support due to fall on the Gold Coast Government had to be carefully assessed and the applications from the different Missions to be balanced. In the main the capital funds were provided for: Secondary Schools, to extend accommodation to existing schools for the duplication of entry and the extension to include two years of six form to Higher Certificate level, with emphasis on science laboratories. Some completely new schools were included, such as the two for Ashanti (which up to then had no secondary school in the whole area): Prempeh College, under Joint Presbyterian-Methodist management, and Opoku Ware, under Catholic management. Teacher Training, to duplicate the courses in the existing Four Year Colleges and increase their Two-year Post-Secondary sections, and to upgrade student living accommodation from the largely junior secondary school type which was all that had been previously possible under limited Mission funds. The development of a range of new Two-year colleges Post-Primary for the earlier years of the primary school, some mens, some womens and some mixed.'

At the moment the Secondary Schools are too few in the country, and private individuals who are endeavouring to fill up the gaps by opening up secondary schools hardly ever receive any encouragement from Government. Yet the numerous applications for admission received at such unassisted secondary schools clearly indicate the immense need for secondary education in the country.<sup>42</sup>

This editorial was published five days after the opening ceremony of Prempeh College was arranged. Basically, unassisted schools were short-lived with poor facilities and quality of teachers. Prempeh College was, whether coincidentally or deliberately, the representation of the colonial Government's response to local pressures. It was the first secondary school financially assisted by the Government in Ashanti those days. Also, Prempeh College announced the substantial introduction of secondary education into entire Ashanti region.

As far as its management was concerned, it was a 'body-corporate' institution, where some of departments and officers, whether private or official, were involved in its running. C.T. Eddy explains: Those 'new higher institutions were to be neither church nor government, but were made 'body-corporate' institutions, though with substantial church representation as a rule on most of the governing bodies.'<sup>43</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer* also reported:

It will be now joined by the Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Mission but will be responsible to a Board whose membership will include the Asantehene, the Principal of University College, the Director of Education and Representative of the Missions.<sup>44</sup>

It is an evidence of genuine co-operation among the Government, the State, the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer*, 9 February 1949.

<sup>43</sup> Oxford Development Records Project (1928-84) *Memorandum of C.T. Eddy* (MSS.Afr.s.1755 (9), Box III), p.9.

<sup>44</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer*, 5 January 1949.

<sup>45</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer*, 8 February 1949.

This system somewhat reflected the intention which the Advisory Committee mentioned in its memorandum on the education of African communities, published in 1935. According to it, local community including chiefs and elders had already been interested in the promotion of education. The co-operation of some bodies in the future, more local commitment, and more initiatives of voluntary agencies, was suggested. While the former education officers pointed out the competition of missions over establishment of schools in Ashanti region<sup>46</sup>, it was characteristic that Methodist and Presbyterian missions participated in the running of Prempeh College. The report of education in the Gold Coast, reviewing situation during 1937-41, recommended that in terms of finance, the contribution of stool treasuries should be important even if it focuses on the development of primary schools. That report suggested the District Education Committee as 'the best means of securing the co-operation of the various elements concerned in education, and of co-ordinating, directing and increasing the local efforts' (Gold Coast Education Committee 1942: 20). That collaboration was achieved in the form of secondary school in Ashanti region. Thus, the Prempeh College started on the different lines of both finance and structure compared with the other Government-assisted or missionary secondary schools such as Achimota and Mfantshipim.

*Ashanti Pioneer* reported an opening ceremony for Prempeh College held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1949. In that ceremony, its participants' expectation for that new secondary school, and the skills students would be able to foster, were shown briefly. Major C. O. Butler, the chief commissioner of Ashanti, addressed as follows:

There is a great and growing need for training men to take up posts of responsibility not just as clerks in offices but in Agriculture Education, Mining, Forestry Architecture, Engineering and Building in the many other technical posts on the fulling of which by Africans the future development of Ashanti and the Gold Coast as a whole largely depends ... We British from overseas are here to help you ultimately to administer the country yourselves ... until you yourselves can provide the agriculturalists, the

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<sup>46</sup> CO 96/733/23: *The annual report of the Education Department of the Gold Coast Colony for the year 1935-36*, p.8.

engineers, the technicians and the tradesman who can develop the natural resources of your country<sup>47</sup>

In other words, the colonial Government expected Prempeh College to create African technocrats. This tendency was correspondent with the discussion on struggles between academic and non-academic education as mentioned in Chapter 2. Similarly to some editorials on *Ashanti Pioneer* and the report of education department since late 1930s, Prempeh College was asked to train practical science so that its graduates can become technocrats who contribute to the scientific or rational development of the local society.

Meanwhile, Tom Barton, the Director of Education, looked at it in a different way. According to *Ashanti Pioneer*, 'he hoped that the boys would be trained in good citizenship so that they might have respect for authority.'<sup>48</sup> 'Citizenship' or 'Citizen (s)' seem to have been a slogan of the education policy envisaged by the Education Department of the Gold Coast Colony by 1940s. Another report showed:

... an increasing supply of honest, devoted and well-educated leaders and citizens is the essential condition of the advance of any society. Particularly does the rapid development of African life in our day make this need urgent.

The school in the Gold Coast has already moved from the stage at which its sole purpose seemed to be to train clerks for employment by European enterprises. ... We must plan our education in relation to the whole of the national life, having in mind as our ultimate aim the education of the whole people to be worthy citizens.<sup>49</sup>

It could be difficult to grasp then nature of the 'citizenship' or 'citizens' that education officers used. However, education officers at least attempted to make students obedient to 'authority', to chiefs under the indirect rule and moderate leaders in the future transfer of power or Self-Government. After the urban riots of 1948, the colonial administration

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<sup>47</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer*, 8 February 1949.

<sup>48</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer*, 8 February 1949.

<sup>49</sup> Gold Coast Education Committee (1942), p.3.



had appointed, first, the Watson Commission, to examine the causes of popular discontent, and then the Coussey Commission, to prepare proposals for a new constitution. This meant that by 1949, there was the possibility of a move away from the 'pure' indirect rule of the inter-war period (in which Native Authorities consisted almost entirely of councils of chiefs and elders), to the introduction of a greater proportion of elected members in new local councils. In other words, the possibility of a more 'modern' local government was already being discussed. The constitutional changes were confirmed in order that national elections could be held in 1951, and it was not until after these elections that the local government reforms were actually implemented. However, by mid 1949, the discussion around the Coussey Commission meant that the definition of 'citizen' had become more complex. In the 1930s, 'good character' and 'good citizenship' was more clearly equated with school leavers who would respect the authority of chiefs but would contribute specific skills to help chiefs in their task of ruling their subjects. By 1949, 'citizens' could also be conceived as people who might respect chieftaincy in a more distant 'cultural' or 'symbolic' way, but who would be active participants in elected local governments, in the development of local council areas, and in providing services to communities. In some respects, then, the model of governance for Prempeh College was a bit 'behind the times'. The College was envisaged as the product of co-operation between chiefs, church and colonial administration, but by the time it actually opened, that 'triumverate' was threatened by the impending constitutional changes that gave greater powers to elected representatives at both the national and local government levels.

Additionally, *Ashanti Pioneer* reports that not only Asantehene Prempeh II but also 'Kumasi Divisional Council Chiefs, Odusohene, Bekwaihene, Kumawuhene, Asamanhene, Bantamahene'<sup>50</sup> were present at the opening ceremony<sup>51</sup>. It was a remarkable sign of chiefs' interests in Prempeh College. In particular, Prempeh II's

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<sup>50</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer*, 8 February 1949.

<sup>51</sup> Also, Chiefly elites had already been committed into the establishment of that new assisted secondary school from the early stage. According to Bartels and Adzakey (1972-73: 315), Osafoadu Amankwatia (1917-?), born in Kumasi as son of Chief Kwabina Amankwatia, was the 'founder and principal of ... Prempeh High School, Kumasi (now Prempeh College, Kumasi)' (1942-45). He was educated at Mfantsipim and Durham University, and became lawyer.

interest in non-academic education would invest Prempeh College with a certain of legitimacy or significance:

It is abundantly significant that the College is domiciled in the capital of Ashanti [Kumasi]. A college of its kind - that is to say, a college that, as a matter of policy, has greater respect for the training of the hand than for the training of the head - has come in perhaps unconscious fulfilment of the wish of Otumfuo the Asantehene who is a really staunch advocate of vocational or technical training.<sup>52</sup>

At the opening ceremony, Prempeh II showed his expectation for Prempeh College: 'the hope that the students of the College would shine not only in the intellectual field but also in the moral firmament.'<sup>53</sup> Apparently, it was similar to Tom Barton's hope. However, his intention as the monarch of Ashanti chieftaincy might be more complicated than either colonial officials or education officers. As mentioned at previous sections, Asante chiefs had been confronted with intense assault of youth since late 1940s. Some articles on *Ashanti Pioneer* contended that chiefs were unsuitable to play the central role in the future administration, whether local or nationwide. On the other, Prempeh II had rejected those criticisms. McCaskie (2006: 346-348) mentions that Prempeh II definitely antagonized against *nkwankwaa* or youngmen. He criticized them for the inadequate or unsuitable education that they received and was concerned by the migration of unemployable youth to urban areas. His opinion was also shared among some chiefs in Asante society. According to *Ashanti Pioneer* (14 January 1948: 4)'s article on the first speech day organized by the Ashanti Youth Association, 'Although most of the Kumasi Divisional Chiefs and intellectuals were invited the only people who graced the occasion with their presence were Nana Kwame Frimpon II, Adontenhene, Bafuo Osei Akoto, Barrister C Kesse and Mr. C E Osei.' The speech delivered by Adontehene was about youth. 'He concluded by saying that one thing youths in this country lack is the reading of local newspapers. He told his listeners that ... they should be newspaper-minded.'

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<sup>52</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer*, 14 February 1949.

<sup>53</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer*, 8 February 1949.

Also, Prempeh II attempted to restore chiefs' reputation by means of an obituary for Prempeh I which was edited officially by a Asante committee and circulated throughout Asante. Public funeral was the demonstration of status and values, and written obituary became a status symbol. According to McCaskie (2006), Prempeh II's aim was appreciated by *nkwankwaa* as well. For Prempeh II, secondary education could play the same role in rehabilitating chiefs as dignified and legitimate position. Indeed, the local newspaper suggested a remedy for chiefs' crisis as follows:

Education of stool heirs By P. A. Safori<sup>54</sup>

IT is becoming abundantly clear that the Native Administrations are part and parcel of the Gold Coast Government, but the opinion that the Native Administrations are, generally speaking, lacking in well-educated chiefs, still prevails.

Not To Blame

The most important and predominant figure in the Native Administration is ... chief. The Native Authority Ordinance has not deprived him of his importance. He had direct dealings with high officials whose education and experience by far surpass his. He is often the President of a Native Court which administers native customary law with some English law. Sometimes he has to participate in the discussion of important bills and documents couched in abstruse legal phraseology at meetings of the Provincial Council, Legislative Council or Executive Council. He serves on Committees charged with the performance of duties of which he has little or no relevant knowledge. In the generality of cases he is not to blame for his sorry plight but deserves our sympathy because he was not responsible for his own education.

Niggardly Scholarships

Both the Government and some of the Native Administrations have awarded scholarships to deserving sons of the soils to study at the local secondary schools and

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<sup>54</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer*, 14 February 1949.

in the British Universities, but hitherto the award of scholarships to stool heirs has been niggardly. It seems to be forgotten that most of the people who have studied overseas at the cost of the Native Administrations have returned as professionals only to do very little, if at all, for the improvement of the Native Administrations. This state of affairs is known to the native Administrations and the Government, and is certainly too bad.

#### Highest Possible Education

It is painfully true that we have a long history to go in increasing the percentage of well-educated chiefs. The dynamic world of today more than ever before calls for action, immediate and remedial, if the chief will continue to play an indispensable part in the administration of the country. Both the Government and the Native Administrations will do well to encourage the highest possible education of the stool heirs by awarding those, who show real aptitude and who identify themselves with the work of the Native Administrations, scholarships to study not only at the local secondary schools but also in the British Universities. They should pursue such studies as will fit them for their future career as chiefs and natural leaders of the people.

As mentioned at the previous section, even politicians needed something to qualify people to be politicians. It became gradually consensus that people engaged in 'administration' - as in the civil service - had a clear hierarchy of positions based on qualifications. Compared with 'administration', 'politics' - as in political parties - were more fluid because individuals could mobilize popular support in a variety of ways. At least, those discourses had already existed so deeply that *Ashanti Pioneer* carried several articles on relationship between chiefs, administration in the future, and secondary education. Secondary education was perceived as one of conditions for chiefs and office holders. Thus, it was inferred that for chiefs, Prempeh II at least, Prempeh College was expected to foster the future chiefs by providing qualification from the perspective of education. The opening of Prempeh College and Prempeh II's commitment to its management contributed more or less to the demonstration of chiefs' prestige.

Consequently, Rev. S. N. Pearson, the first head teacher of Prempeh College, maintains that:

Speaking on the Curriculum which would embrace the normal academic subjects the Principal said that stress would also be laid on modern subjects as Science, Agriculture and Engineering. After four years course for Cambridge School Certificate Examinations two years also would qualify students for the Higher School Certificate which would entitle successful candidates to the Gold Coast University College.<sup>55</sup>

After its opening ceremony, an editorial on *Ashanti Pioneer* evaluates it as follow:

The curriculum of Prempeh College is such as will enable the average student to sit for the Cambridge Senior School Certificate examination in his fourth year and the Cambridge Higher School Certificate in his sixth. We are reliably informed that sufficient attention will be paid to purely academic subjects, but greater stress will of necessity be laid on studies in the different branches of science, engineering and other technical subjects and practice. This slight bias in favour of technical or vocational training leads, we think, a homely colour to it and at once labels Prempeh College as the first of its kind in British West Africa.<sup>56</sup>

Its curriculum would represent those tangled views of colonial officials, education officers, and chiefs. 'Slight' emphasis on modern subjects at the level of secondary education, may have been a compromise between colonial Government, which demanded technocrats for the future development, and chiefs who anticipated that post-primary education would make the successors of chiefs legitimate chiefs.

How has Prempeh College operated for Asante chiefs and chiefly elites so far? Here an old boy is taken up for discussion although we need to study the cases of other

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<sup>55</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer*, 8 February 1949.

<sup>56</sup> *Ashanti Pioneer*, 14 February 1949.

Prempeh College leavers further. He is John Agyekum Kufuor (Kofi Diawuo, 1938-), the former President of Ghana.<sup>57</sup>

Basically, his family had more access to traditional authority, wealth, and European education than other chiefs in Asante society. His father, Kwadwo Agyekum, was Oyokohene. Every Asantehene had Oyokohene as their uncles and advisors traditionally. Indeed, Kwadwo Agyekum was the advisor of Prempeh II. However, more important was John's mother and matrilineal lineage because Asante society has been based on matrilineal institutions although patrilineal orders co-existed since colonial period. John's mother, Ama Paa, was belonging to the lineage of Apagya family and Apagyahene. Apagya and Apagyahene was originally an office which was granted to ahenemma (sons of Asantehene). Among the lineage, Ama Paa was the trustee of Apagya's household (Apagyafie) by 1960s since she was the only woman to succeed in its matrilineal line. Their lineage has also been linked to Golden Stool, office of Asantehene. In fact, Ama Paa's mother, Akua Bema Mensa got married with Asantehene Prempeh I, and then with Kwabena Kufuor (Ama Paa's biological father). John's half-sister, Akua Fokuo was the wife of Asantehene Prempeh II.<sup>58</sup>

At the same time, some of John's family members had the same careers and mentality as those called akonkofo. For example, Kwabena Mensa, an influential chief as Apagyahene (Ama Paa's matrilineal uncle), was also successful at business, as McCaskie (2009: 451) points out: 'During the 1890s he traded rubber on the Gold Coast in exchange for salt, cloth, guns, and ammunition. ... Thereafter he was a pioneer cocoa grower and broker on a large scale.' Kwaku Addo Kwarbo (Kwabena Mensa's nephew, and Ama Paa's sibling), 'completed his training in 1925, ... he entered

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<sup>57</sup> His biography is: 'Barrister-at-Law, Solicitor and Advocate; Politicians. BORN: December 8, 1938; Kumasi, Ashanti Region. Ghanaian. Married, with four children. EDUCATION: Osei Tutu Boarding School, Kumasi (1951-53); Prempeh College, Kumasi (1954-58); admitted Lincoln's Inn, London, England (1959-61); Oxford University, England (1961-64). Gained B.A. (Hons) (Oxon) degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics. Called to the English Bar (1965). APPOINTMENTS: Private Legal Practitioner (1965-66); Town Clerk, Kumasi City Council (1966-69); Member of the Constituent Assembly (1968-69); Member of Parliament (P.P.) (Second Republic) for Atwima-Nwabiagya Constituency; Ministerial Secretary, Minister of External Affairs; Member, Standing Orders Committee in the dissolved National Assembly (August 29, 1969-January 13, 1972).' See Bartels and Adzakey (1972-73), p.384.

<sup>58</sup> For details, see McCaskie (2009).

government service as a teacher. ... He succeeded as Apagyahene when his uncle died in 1936' (McCaskie 2009: 451). Likewise, since they succeeded at business, they were anxious about the return of Asantehene and pre-colonial orders. In other words, they were afraid that they could not deal with their own accumulated wealth by themselves because of traditional duties and taxes while they approved the return of Asantehene Prempeh I.

John's family was also similar to akonkofo in terms of attitudes towards education and bringing up of children. According to McCaskie (2009):

Asante chiefship was slow to embrace western education because it saw it as a menial training of the sort historically associated with servants. Apagyahene Kwabena Mensa was among the first to realize that it offered business skills and financial rewards. As noted, he sent his nephew to school in the Gold Coast [Achimota College]. There Addo-Kufuor [ Kwaku Addo Kwarbo] learned that the emerging leaders of modern African society were men trained in the high status, middle class, male British profession. He [Addo-Kufuor] saw the investment value of such training for Apagyahene and funded and encouraged his nephews to acquire professional qualifications in the Gold Coast and in the U.K. The eldest boy [Francis Kufuor, going to Achimota College] became a research chemist, the next born [John Agyekum Kufuor, going to Prempeh College] became a lawyer, and the third [Kwame Addo Kufuor, going to Achimota] became a doctor.<sup>59</sup>

In particular, Kwabena Mensa was preoccupied with the preparation of his nephew for 'modern colonial chiefship' (McCaskie 2009: 451) under the indirect rule. Thus, John's family had perceived western education in general, secondary education in particular, as a qualification securing legitimacy for chiefs at the early stage. In the case of John, like his siblings, 'he very much wanted to go to Achimota School. ... Surprising himself, Kufuor did not pass the interview. ... The Apagyahene's cousin, Mr Mensah Bonsu, a businessman in Kumasi visited and persuaded the family to send Kufuor to Prempeh College, which in his view was as good as Achimota. ... They did indeed'

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<sup>59</sup> McCaskie (2009), p.455.

(Agyeman-Duah 2006: 12). It was an unanticipated event for both John's family and John himself that he entered Prempeh College, new secondary school in Ashanti region.

He studied at Prempeh College during 1954-58. Agyeman-Duah (2006) describes his school life in details. As far as his interest in subjects is concerned, 'Kufuor took more [grades] to the Arts than Sciences and developed an interest in History, Latin, Geography, English among other subjects, scoring A grades in some of these' (Agyeman-Duah 2006: 13). Although Prempeh College in theory was going to lay emphasis on modern scientific subjects, in fact J. A. Kufuor concentrated on and preferred 'book learning' – i.e. the literary and academic subjects in the Arts and Humanities. In Prempeh College, John encountered with many schoolfellows who thereafter became prominent people in Ghana's national and Ashanti local society.

Some of his schoolfellows, including his best friend, were Dr Kwame Appiah Poku, I.K. Apea (with whom he had started school at Government Boys School), his cousin Kwame Adjaye Kufuor (who later studied at the City of Westminster College in London and was a great companion to Kufuor during their period abroad) and Nana Osei Bonsu, currently the Asante Mamponghehene. At Prempeh Kufuor enjoyed sports and news soon spread that the young man from Apagyafie was not only topping his class in many of the subjects but that he was a good football player, and played cricket, as well as table tennis.<sup>60</sup>

Relationships with classmates had lasting effects in Kufuor's politics. When John Agyekum Kufuor entered Prempeh College and studied there during the 1950s, that secondary school had still been new one with incomplete prestige, compared with the other secondary school in the Gold Coast such as Achimota, Mfantispim, and so on. As its graduates, including John, became leading people in Ghana's national politics, economy, and the other fields, an alumni network became a means of re-affirming the importance of the school in grooming future leaders. And, vice versa, the fact of having graduated from Prempeh College played a key role in the careers of individuals.

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<sup>60</sup> Agyeman-Duah (2006), p.13.



Taken together, these tendencies built up the prestige of the College and its reputation as a 'nexus' among political elites, which encompassed both chiefs and politicians. The alumni network would have caused Prempeh College to prominence. Vice versa, the fact that they graduated from Prempeh College could have played the crucial role of membership in constructing a new nexus among chiefs and chiefly elites.

## CONCLUSION

Allman (1990) demonstrates the continuing influence of chiefs on commoners through the 1950s. In this respect, we would review the significance of the 1940s. As mentioned before, Asante chiefs and Asantehene had experienced massive crisis during the 1940s. Even their social status was the object of review. However, they had got over those difficulties by adapting themselves to transitional or professionalized society. Secondary education would potentially be breakthrough. Thus, chiefs in the 1940s Asante had never been archaic. Prempeh College embodied their flexibility and adaptation. It was by means of the secondary school built in 1949 that Asante chiefs would smoothly plunge into a struggle for decolonization.

This thesis also considers the contribution of secondary education to local society. For the Colonial Government during the 1940s, 'adapted' education meant the favour of applied or professional science at the general secondary level. Meanwhile, for local people, a fact that individuals entered secondary schools was a prominent status symbol, independent of what they learnt there and even whether they graduated and obtained School Certificates or not. For chiefs' siblings, secondary education gradually became a condition of politics as an occupation. Thus, there was an obvious gap between the Colonial Government and the recipients of secondary education in terms of intentions charged by both. Similarly, Prempeh College was not adapted until local society found out the social role of secondary education, used secondary education, and urged to change the curriculum.

Did Prempeh College adapt into Asante society on the line of applied science since the 1950s or not? We can estimate this through an investigation into Prempeh College leavers, and relationship between Prempeh College and the University of Science and Technology erected at Kumasi. Bartels and Adzakey (1972-73) demonstrates that Prempeh College had contributed to the creation of technocrats acting at both local and nationwide levels.

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